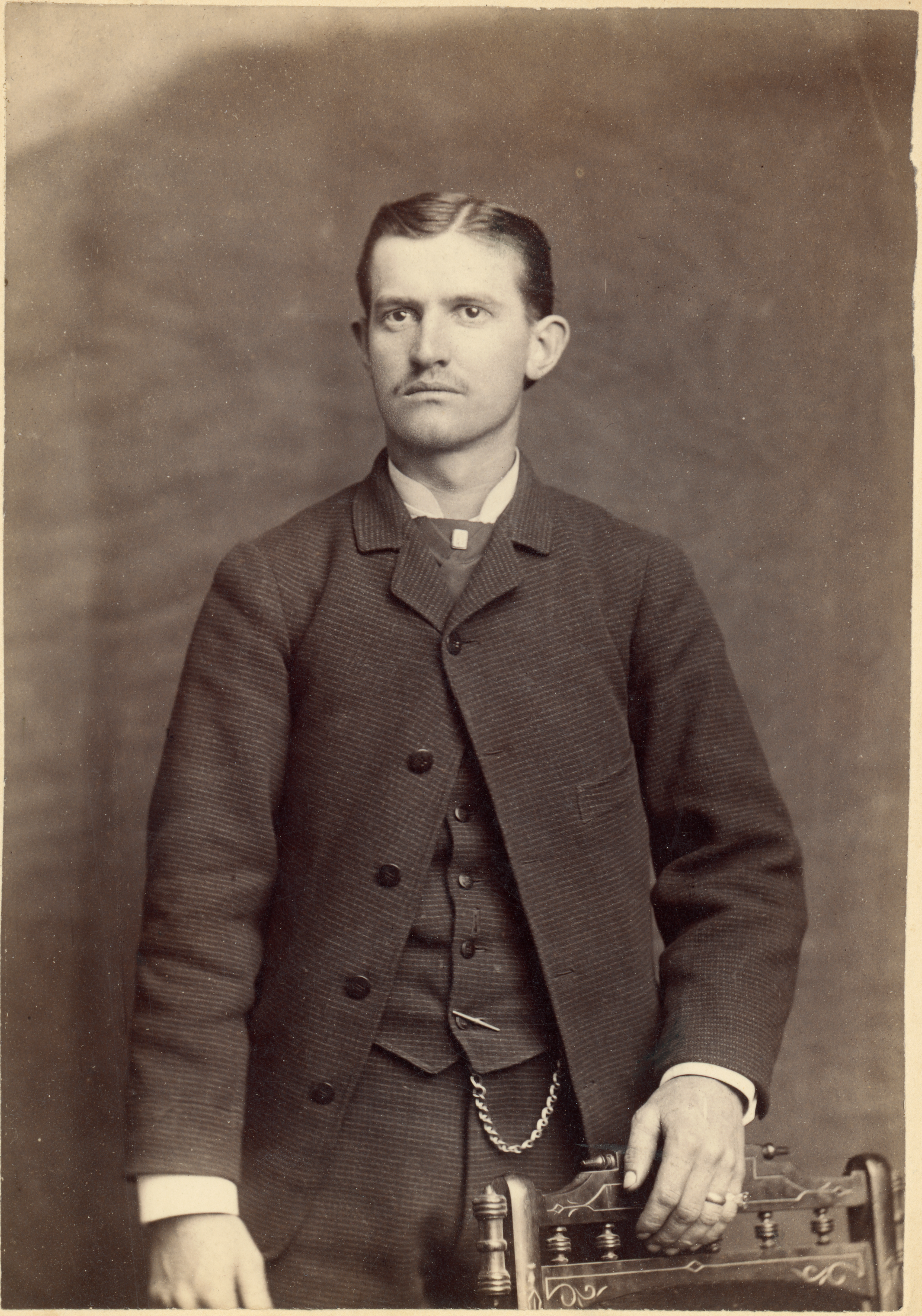
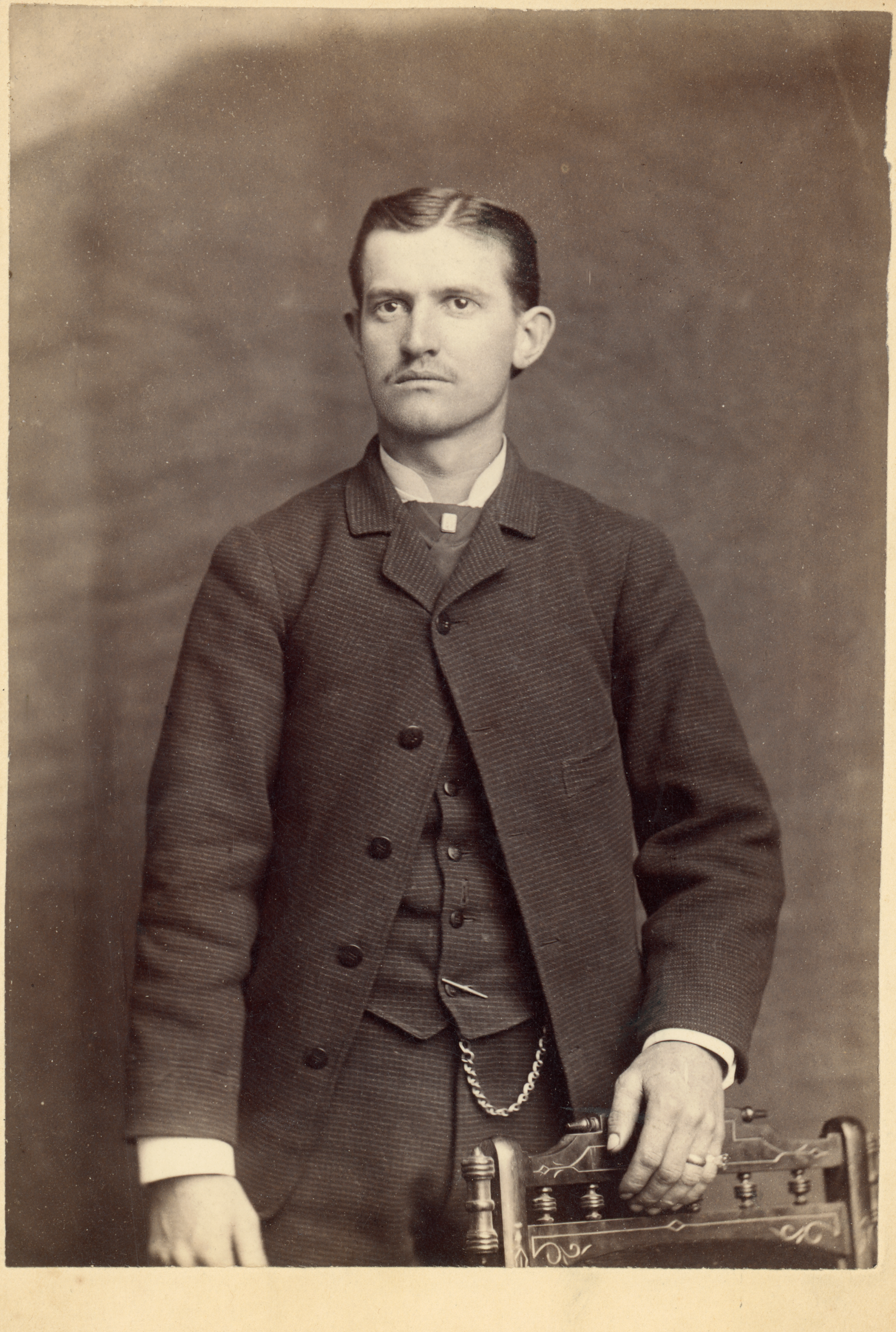




Robert Price Dear son of Robert Newton Dear c 1880

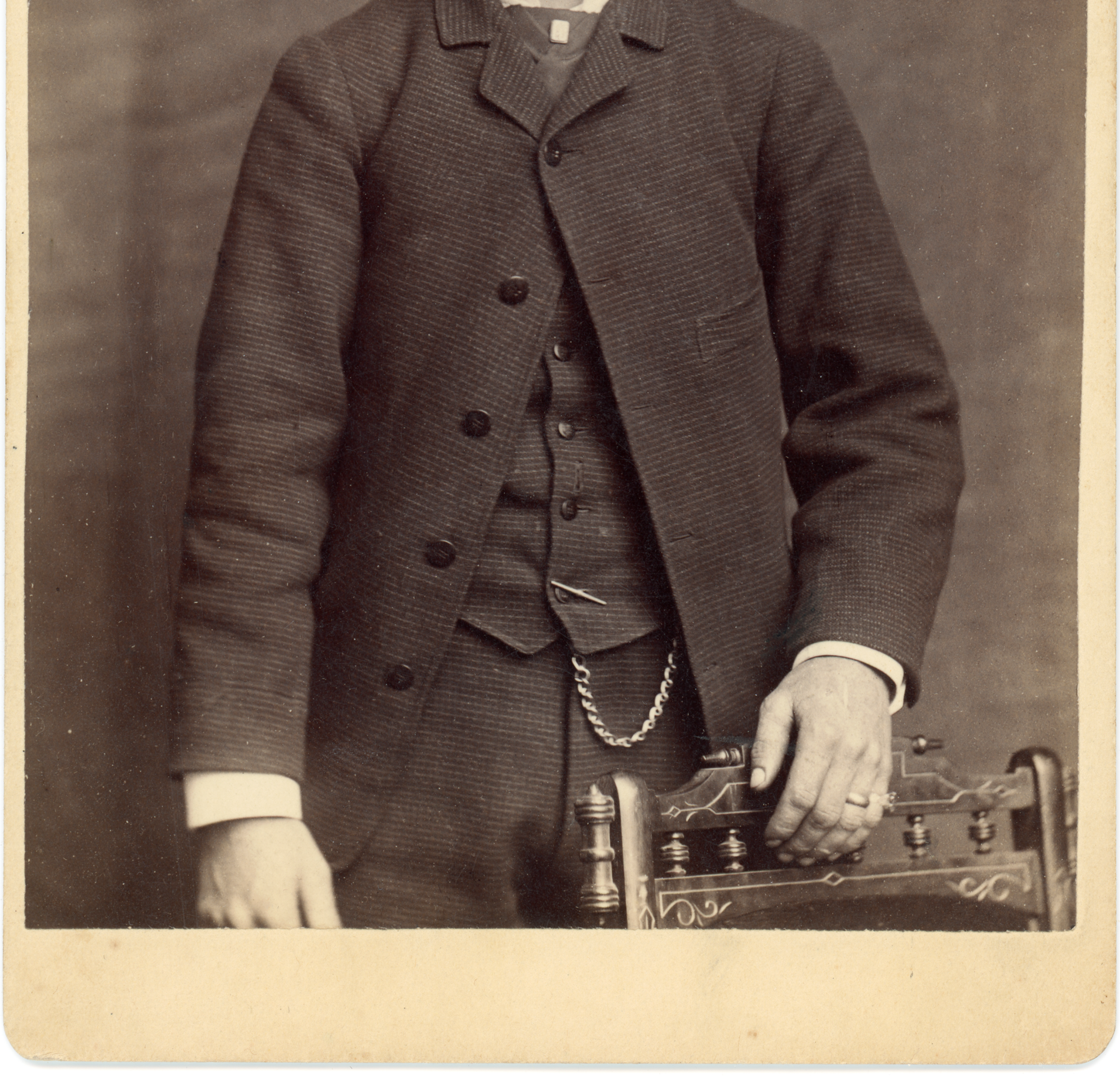
Reflections

Jeffrey Hunt
July 28 2025

This cabinet photo comes from the Vail Dear archive and very likely depicts Robert Price Dear, son of Robert Newton Dear and brother of Allan Jenkins Dear. After Robert N. Dear was killed in 1863 at the Battle of Big Black River Bridge in Mississippi, his widow Mary Schultz remarried in 1866 to James Washington Deakins. Because of that later marriage, the image was at first thought to belong to the Deakins line. More recent identification by Wally Densmoor, however, suggests that the sitter is instead Robert Price Dear, one of the young sons left fatherless after the war.

The photographer's imprint appears to read F. A. Smith, Artist, Commercial Street, Salem, Oregon. Newspaper references confirm that F. A. Smith was operating a photographic gallery in Salem by 1876 and was still active there in 1877, which helps place the photo in the late 1870s or, more likely, the 1880s. If the identification is correct, that dating fits Robert Price Dear's age reasonably well.

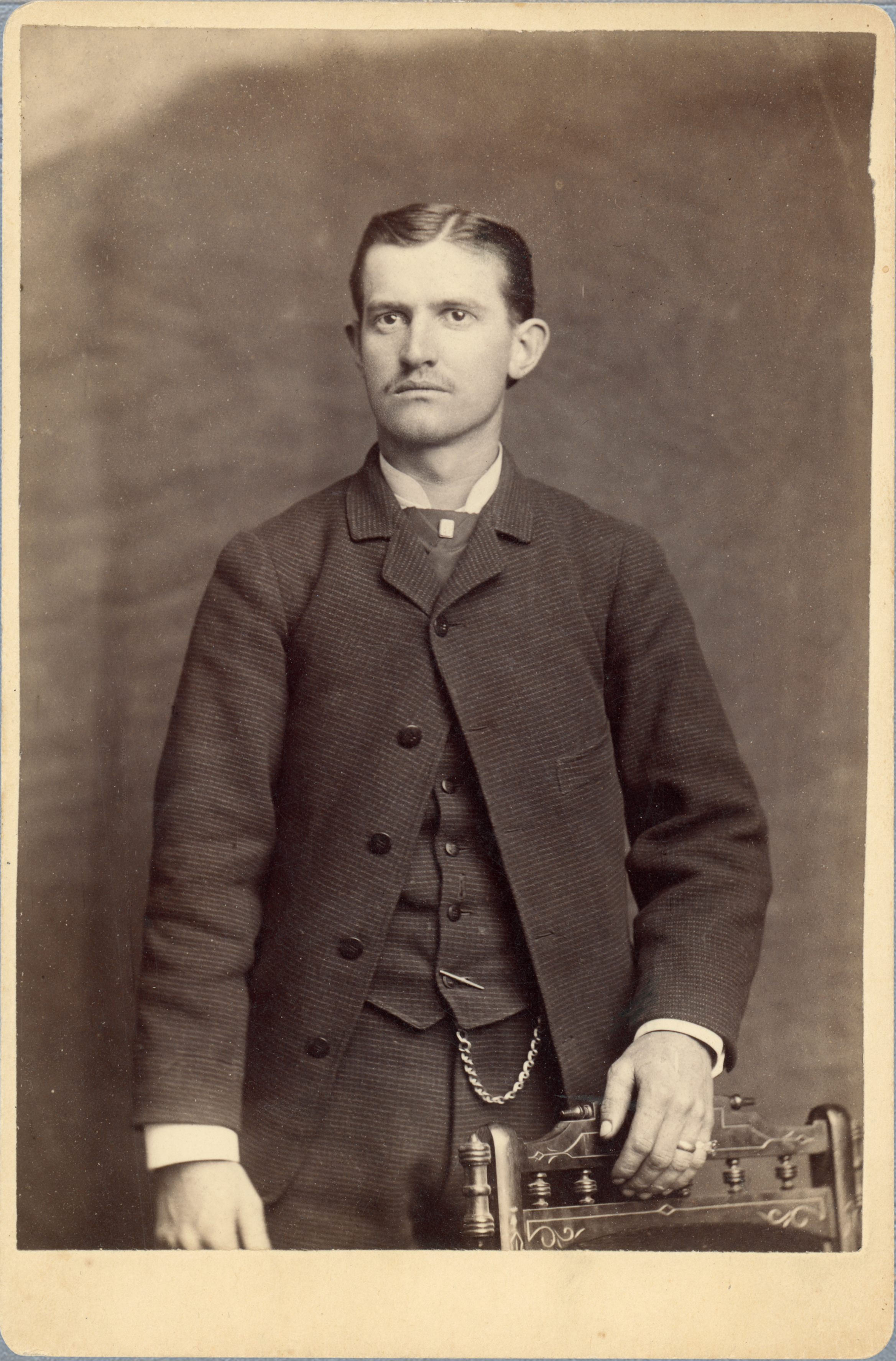
According to Dunsmoor, Robert Price Dear later married Fannie Hall Thomas in Oakland and managed the Thomas-Dear Ranch until their divorce.



F. A. SMITH,

ARTIST.

Commercial Street,
Salem, - - - Oregon.

NEGATIVES PRESERVED.